

## Mayor's Message

January 2009

Welcome to 2009! I look forward to the new opportunities and challenges that come with the day to day operation of our City. 2008 was a good year in Murray. It brought the culmination of a variety of projects, including a new fire station on Vine Street, a remodeled library, an updated website and a City provided ambulance service. I am looking forward to reporting upon the State of the City on January 20<sup>th</sup> in my report to the City Council. You are invited to attend to hear firsthand what is happening in our City.

Several issues have been raised in the last few weeks that I would like to address. Since we are in the thick of winter, the question has been asked about our budget for snow removal. It has been reported that we have used most of our \$60,000 allocation for salt. While that is true, it does not mean we will discontinue using salt and plowing the City streets. Winter snow storms are unpredictable, so we budget an 'average' amount determined by past years experience. The dollar amount is sometimes high or low depending upon the weather we get, but we plan to provide the service and will do that this year, too. We appreciate the help you provide as you keep vehicles off the streets to allow the plows room to do their work.

There have also been a variety of news reports on the winter work taking place on the Jordan River Parkway. Under the direction of our City arborists and Parks officials, our crews spend time removing some of the invasive species growing along the river. The Russian olive trees and tamarisk are non-native plants that use excessive water and prevent other plants from thriving. I understand that it looks bare for a while, but we are replanting native varieties that will provide better homes for the wildlife and more enjoyment for those who recreate there. This is a proactive step we are taking to making the Jordan River an even greater resource in the future.

Finally, with the economic challenges we all are facing, we are addressing budget shortfalls for the City. Sales tax collection is down about 6% from last year. The Council has worked with me to review each area of our current budget and we have pro-actively made cuts to cover the anticipated deficit. We will continue to monitor expenditures carefully and feel we are prepared to weather this economic storm. Your thoughts and concerns are always welcome.

I wish you success in your personal and family goals of 2009. With the help of a great City Council, City staff, and supportive citizens, we will continue to provide the best possible services with reasonable costs. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve. Happy New Year!